

{My Madison}

Hudson Family Weekend

The Hudsons celebrate their eighth JMU Family Weekend

BY THE HUDSON FAMILY

Ryan Hudson ('04)

As a JMU freshman in 2000, I took part in my first Family Weekend. Nine years later, I was back in Harrisonburg again, this time as an alumnus and as an older brother of a current Madison senior. It's like the circle of life, but with more Duke Dog.

A lot has changed since 2000; campus has expanded and continues to expand. There is a new dining hall, new dorms, improvements to Bridgeforth Stadium and even a secret passageway off the end of the Quad. Much like the school itself, JMU's home is growing, too. For proof of that, one needs to look no further than Harrisonburg's revived downtown.

But much is still the same. Weaver Hall, my first JMU home, is still opening its doors to freshmen beginning their own adventures. School pride remains the constant heartbeat of campus and at no time is that truer than on fall Saturdays when parking lots everywhere are invaded by people in purple ready to support their Dukes' football team.

The JMU community I first met nine years ago remains always ready to open its arms and serve as a home away from home every year for Family Weekend.

Dorothy and Donald Hudson ('04P, '10P)

We take Family Weekend literally. Our whole family attends, all five of us.

As we were making lists, buying food for tailgating and checking game-day weather forecasts, it suddenly hit us — this would be our last JMU Family Weekend as current parents. We began attending in 2000 when our oldest, Ryan ('04), was a freshman. Our youngest, Katie ('10), is now a senior. Our middle child Greg also loves JMU, though he is fiercely loyal to his own alma mater Christopher Newport University. We have

been lucky enough to spend eight fall weekends in Harrisonburg enjoying all the frivolities of a JMU Family Weekend.

Through the years we have attended JMU-sponsored concerts, gone to the annual bulb sale, hit up the Bookstore for much needed hoodies, dined at many, many restaurants and, of course, cheered for Dukes' football, soccer and field hockey.

For any families reading this who are just beginning their own Madison Experience, our advice is to treasure each and every minute.

Whether it's an ice cream at Kline's, a walk around the Quad, a picture in front of Duke Dog, getting dressed in all your purple and gold, a great breakfast at Little Grill or simply spending a beautiful weekend with your son or daughter, JMU will be part of you forever.

Katie Hudson ('10)

When my parents arrived on campus for 2009 Family Weekend, their first stop was picking me up from campus. I threw on my book bag, walked out the doors of Harrison and hopped into their van. As a senior, I admit that it is still nice to be spoiled every once in awhile and to feel as though I'm back in middle school with my

parents waiting to pick me up from school. They even sat in the bleachers during my intramural field hockey game that night.

Having my parents and my two brothers all together for a whole weekend is always something I look forward to. We go out to eat, experience Harrisonburg's new downtown, walk through campus and, of course, tailgate. As we were doing all of these activities and I saw freshmen with their parents in tow passing me, I suddenly had a reality check. Next year, I won't have this weekend to look forward to. I won't have my parents picking me up from class or cheering me on in a sport. But I will have the memories of how great a school like JMU is and how lucky I am to experience it with my entire family — even if for just a weekend. **MI**

* See the Hudson's Family Weekend video at www.jmu.edu/parents



JMU's annual Family Weekend has been an eight-year purple and gold family tradition for the Hudson family. Taking time out for a pre-game photo are (l-r): Greg, Ryan ('04), Madison intern Katie ('10), Donald and Dorothy ('04P, '10P).